

## SPIRITUAL DISCOVERY JOURNAL BAD HABITS & ADDICTIONS



### INTRODUCTION

Now that you have completed your study of *Spiritual Discovery – 7 Principles for Spiritual Growth*, you may find it helpful to write a Spiritual Discovery Journal. In this exercise, you will be taking another look at bad habits and addictions that you want to overcome. Because we are complex beings and our hearts are deep waters, there is often more to discover. Writing this journal is an opportunity to find more healing and freedom.

Bad habits and addictions include anything that has mastered you (alcohol, drugs, gambling, gaming, media, fantasizing, pornography, sex, hoarding, exercise, shopping, or \_\_\_\_\_). There is a separate journal outline for bad habits and addictions regarding food. (**Note:** If you have a life-threatening addiction, please seek professional help.)

Writing this journal will require thoughtful reflection, and it may stir painful emotions. If you are tempted to stop writing, use the 7 Principles for Spiritual Growth to help you uncover what you believe and go to God for insight, wisdom and truth. Call a trusted friend, if needed.

### PART 1 – CURRENT EVENTS

In your journal, include the following:

- The bad habit or addiction that you want to overcome;
- How often you engage in this behavior;
- Give several recent examples of your bad habit or addiction, and in each example, include the following:
  - The emotion(s) that moved you toward your bad habit or addiction (boredom, anger, fear, anxiety, shame, loneliness, feeling like a failure, feeling unloved, \_\_\_\_\_); (See page 55.)
  - What you desired (relief, pleasure, comfort, acceptance, or \_\_\_\_\_);
  - All the things that you reaped (temporary pleasure, shame, guilt, loneliness, financial challenges, loss of job, conflict, family strife, health problems, or \_\_\_\_\_). Give details.
  - How you justified your bad habit or addiction to yourself or others:
    - Did you blame something or someone else in an effort to avoid taking responsibility? If so, who or what? (See page 76.)
    - Did you claim helplessness? (See page 77.)
    - Did you minimize it or deny it was a problem? (See page 78.)
      - “This is no big deal.”
      - “I could stop if I wanted to.”
      - “It doesn’t hurt anybody.”
    - Did you compare yourself to others before, during or after this behavior? If so, how did the comparison impact you? (See page 79.)
  - What feels true about your bad habit or addiction?
    - “This will make me happy.”
    - “I need this to relax.”
    - “I can’t live without this.”
    - “I will miss out if I stop.”
    - “I can’t change.”
    - “\_\_\_\_\_”

- After you uncover what feels true, ask God for insight, wisdom and truth.
  - “God, is it true that I can’t change?”
  - “God, is it true that this will make me happy?”
  - “God, is it true that \_\_\_\_\_?”
- Take time to pray, meditate and listen to God. (See page 109.)
- Include any insight, wisdom or truth that you receive.

## PART 2 – PAST EVENTS

For the second part of your journal, look back at any painful or unpleasant events that have shaped your life and consider whether or not these events still impact your life today. Include the following:

- Painful or unpleasant past events that have shaped your life;
  - The emotion(s) you felt during this event (primary and secondary); (See page 55.)
  - The emotion(s) you feel as you consider it now;
  - What you came to believe about yourself, others or God as a result of that event;
    - “I’m not enough.”
    - “I’m a mistake.”
    - “I’m all alone.”
    - “I’m not important.”
    - “I don’t fit in.”
    - “I can’t trust anybody.”
    - “God doesn’t care about me.”
    - “I’m not good enough for God.”
    - “\_\_\_\_\_.”
- Does this belief(s) still feel true today? If so...
  - What emotion(s) do you feel when this belief is triggered?
  - How do you move when this belief is triggered? (See page 74.)
  - Does this belief move you toward your bad habit or addiction?
- After you uncover what feels true, ask God for insight, wisdom and truth.
  - “God, is it true that I’m not important?”
  - “God, is it true that I’m all alone?”
  - “God, is it true that you don’t care about me?”
  - “God, is it true that \_\_\_\_\_?”
- Take time to pray, meditate and listen to God. (See page 109.)
- Include any insight, wisdom or truth that you receive.

## PART 3 – REFLECTION

- What have you discovered about your bad habit or addiction?
- What would it look like to “move toward God” when you are tempted with your bad habit or addiction?

